



Montgomery County Council

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COUNCIL APPROVES CHANGES TO BOOST AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN COUNTY

The Montgomery County Council today unanimously approved legislation designed to boost affordable housing in Montgomery County by creating more incentives to produce such housing near Metro stations.

The bill, co-sponsored by Councilmembers Derick Berlage, Steve Silverman, and Howard Denis, reduces the requirement that developers in central business districts set aside 15 percent of units produced in developments of 50 units or more as affordable housing. The measure would reduce the requirement to the standard 12.5 percent of units that governs in the rest of the County. It would also allow developers to develop as market-rate properties the density bonus received for developing near Metro stations.

"This will create affordable housing right where it is needed – near our Metro stations," said Councilmember Berlage, who chairs the Council's Planning, Housing & Economic Development Committee (PHED).

"The costs associated with high rise development have made it near impossible to include Moderately-Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs) in those developments. As a result, the county was losing
(more...)"

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opportunities to place housing development near Metro stations and losing the opportunity to increase the number of affordable housing.

“These changes were discussed with various stakeholders and received the support of the Department of Housing and Community Affairs, the Park and Planning Commission, the Housing Opportunities Commission, and developers. “

“Increasing our stock of affordable housing must be a primary focus for the County,” stated Councilmember Howard Denis. “This makes it more feasible to create them in our business districts where our transportation infrastructure is already in place.”

“Our downtowns are exactly the places where we want MPDU’s,” offered Councilmember Steve Silverman. “The jobs are there. Public transportation is there.”

This action is part of a continuing effort by the Planning, Housing & Economic Development Committee and the County Council to address affordable housing needs.

The PHED Committee spent last year reviewing the challenges of aging multifamily properties, which culminated in a new program entitled “Building Neighborhoods to Call Home.” The Committee increased funding to the Housing Initiative Fund by 170 percent to \$7 million. In the fall, PHED reviewed the state of affordable housing countywide and adopted changes to Landlord/Tenant laws.

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